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SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREPARATION OF PLANS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 18 February 1963, at 3.40 p.m.

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PRESENT:

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| Chairman: | Mr. GARCIA DEL SOLAR | (Argentina) |
| Rapporteur: | Mr. DEMETROPOULOS | Greece |
| Members: | Mr. Florencio MENDEZ | Argentina |
| | Mr. ROBICHAUD | Canada |
| | Mr. MAHENDRAN | Ceylon |
| | Mr. BAYONA | Colombia |
| | Mr. VOLIO JIMENEZ | Costa Rica |
| | Mr. JATIVA | Ecuador |
| | Mr. BOUQUIN | France |
| | Mr. ACHKAR | Guinea |
| | Mr. GOUDARZNIA | Iran |
| | Mr. SCOLAMIERO | Italy |
| | Mr. SAWAI | Japan |
| | Mr. DICKO | Mali |
| | Mr. LUQMAN | Mauritania |
| | Mr. BAROODY | Saudi Arabia |
| | Mr. ANUMAN-RAJADHON | Thailand |
| | Mr. OSTROVSKI | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| | Mr. ATTLEE | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| | Mr. MEANS | United States of America |
| | Mr. MARQUES SERE | Uruguay |
| Representatives of specialized agencies: | | |
| | Mr. REYMOND | International Labour Organisation |
| | Mr. SALSAMENDI | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| | Mrs. LOSEY MAPES | World Health Organization |
| Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund: | | |
| | Mr. GERIN | |
| Secretariat: | Mr. HUMPHREY | Director, Division of Human Rights |
| | Mr. OBHRAI | Office of Public Information |
| | Mr. CULPEPPER | Secretary of the Committee |

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PLANS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1775 (XVII); ST/SG/AC.4/1-5; ST/SG/AC.4/L.1-2, L.3/Rev.1, L.4) (continued)

Mr. DEMETROPOULOS (Greece), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee (ST/SG/AC.4/L.4), said first that the document was provisional and not only could be amended by the delegations concerned but would be completed in the light of the comments made during the present meeting. The Committee's draft report was considerably shorter than the working paper prepared by the Bureau in collaboration with the Secretariat (ST/SG/AC.4/L.3/Rev.1), for repetitions had been eliminated so far as possible, although some suggestions were mentioned under several headings: it had seemed more suitable to classify the suggestions according to the type of organization to which they were addressed rather than according to their subject-matter. He would draw the Committee's attention to some changes which should be made in the document before it: on page 7, the words "and possibly hold round-table discussions" should be added at the end of paragraph 3 (b), and the phrase "as UNESCO has already suggested in a circular letter to the Postmasters-General of the Member States" should be added at the end of paragraph 3 (d). In addition, a suggestion which had been omitted by error should be inserted between paragraphs 4 (b) and 4 (c), in the following terms: "That Governments consider entrusting the organization of the celebration to an existing institution or an ad hoc committee designated or set up for this purpose." Lastly, paragraph 5 (h) should be replaced by the following text: "To reproduce and distribute United Nations posters on the theme of human rights including the winning design of the UNESCO international contest." In conclusion, he wished to thank the Division of Human Rights, the Office of Public Information and all the members of the Secretariat for the valuable assistance they had given him in the preparation of the report.

Mr. HUMPHREY (Secretariat) recalled that any draft resolution the adoption of which would require special expenditures was usually accompanied by a

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statement of financial implications prepared by the Secretary-General. In the present case, unfortunately, it had not been possible to comply with that rule, specifically because it was hardly possible to estimate with accuracy the cost of each of the measures contemplated in the report. Nevertheless, the Secretariat was able to furnish provisional information concerning the financial implications of the suggestions in section I. The expenditures which would be necessitated by the recommendations in paragraph 2, sub-paragraphs (a), (c), (d), (f), and (g) - or some $40,000 in all - could be charged to the regular budget. As for the measures contemplated in sub-paragraphs (b) and (e), if they were approved by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council and if the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions gave a similar opinion, the Secretary-General would have to secure their financing as unforeseen extraordinary expenditures and to request, at the resumed seventeenth session of the General Assembly, a supplementary appropriation of approximately $68,000, divided in the following way: $9,000 for the execution and hanging of a bronze plaque on which the Declaration would be inscribed; $20,000 for the preparation of a history of the Universal Declaration; $17,000 for the publication of the history in French and English (a figure established on the basis of 10,000 copies in each of the two languages); and $22,000 for the preparation of the pamphlets, wall sheets and leaflets mentioned in paragraph 2 (e).

Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) wished first to commend the Rapporteur for his report, which was both clear and complete. As to the financial implications, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would undoubtedly consent to the necessary expenditures. But in case objections were raised against the suggestions in the report from the financial standpoint, he would like to submit to members of the Committee and to the Secretariat some ideas which might perhaps be useful. The proposed bronze plaque would have only a symbolic value - and it might even be feared that the plaque would one day seem anachronistic, on the possibly optimistic assumption that problems of human rights would eventually cease to exist - but many of those who came to visit the United Nations building would undoubtedly read the engraved text and his delegation was, therefore, not

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opposed to the hanging of such a plaque. A measure of that kind, however, was obviously not a revenue-producing one; whereas the sale of a history of the Universal Declaration, prepared in the proper style, might enable the United Nations, as the copyright owner, to realize profits which would be paid into a fund to encourage respect for human rights. Similarly, the text of the Universal Declaration might be disseminated in the form of an illuminated parchment for use as a wall decoration in homes and schools; receipts from sales would be paid into the above-mentioned fund and might make possible the granting of scholarships or fellowships and the awarding of prizes. Lastly, without wishing to go into the technical details, he suggested that the United Nations and the Postmasters-General of the States should impose a special surtax on the stamps which would be issued to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, the sums collected in that way also being paid into the above-mentioned fund. Those were the ideas he had wished to submit for consideration by members of the Committee; he knew that he might be reproached for aiming too high or for being over-optimistic, but he would none the less be happy to know the opinion of delegations and the Secretariat in regard to them.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, the suggestions of the Saudi Arabian representative would be included in the report.

Mr. MEANS (United States of America), after congratulating the Rapporteur on the able manner in which he had performed a difficult task and expressing the hope that the report under discussion could be adopted without difficulty, requested that, in the light of an idea put forward by his delegation at an earlier meeting, a sub-paragraph (f) be added to paragraph 6, on page 9, in the following terms: "Encourage local communities to establish check lists designed to appraise the communities' effectiveness in promoting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Mr. BOUQUIN (France) recalled that, in the debate concerning the question raised by the United States representative, his delegation had made some criticism of the expression "check lists". It had no reservations as to the substance of the United States suggestion, but thought that the idea of inquiries or public opinion polls should be substituted for that of check lists.

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Mr. MEANS (United States of America) accepted the suggestion of the representative of France.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, the sub-paragraph proposed by the United States delegation, as amended by the French delegation, would be inserted in the report.

Mr. OSTROVSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed that the Rapporteur had coped very well with the difficulties of his task and had been fairly successful in drafting a document which had the merit of being both brief and precise. The report did, however, have some imperfections. First, paragraph 8 did not give a sufficiently faithful account of the views expressed by the Soviet and certain other delegations during the discussion. The Rapporteur's desire to be brief was undoubtedly creditable, and the Commission on Human Rights could of course refer to the summary records in order to ascertain the views expressed by delegations. But the Commission's work would be greatly facilitated if the report gave a general indication of the different opinions stated. It might therefore be appropriate to add a paragraph filling the gap. With respect, for instance, to the second and third sentences of paragraph 8, his delegation had urged the need, regarding the meaning to be attached to the celebration of the Declaration's fifteenth anniversary, to focus attention on the fight against racial discrimination, fascist ideology and war criminals, while other delegations had drawn attention to other violations of human rights. The Ceylonese delegation had suggested that Member States should be invited to devote particular attention to the implementation of the Declaration and to strike the balance of what had been achieved and what remained to be done. Other delegations had expressed the hope that the year of the celebration would mark the end of the colonial system, which was the very negation of human rights. The report should therefore give a more faithful account of the Committee's discussion on the objectives of the celebration, both in order to facilitate the work of the Commission on Human Rights and to indicate to non-governmental organizations and Governments the various meanings which might be attached to the anniversary and the basic issues which should on that occasion be stressed.

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The suggestions set forth in the report, while very clearly presented, were unfortunately all of an abstract nature. It might of course be hoped that Governments and non-governmental organizations would give concrete expression to the suggestions - particularly in the matter of abolishing colonialism - but at the same time it would clearly be useful to recommend some practical measures for combating the most odious encroachments on human rights. In that connexion he wished to remind members of the pertinent resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.

As to the financial implications discussed by the Director of the Division of Human Rights, it was clear that the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary would involve some expenditures which, unfortunately, could not be avoided. Nevertheless, the Organization's financial situation impelled one to consider very seriously the effectiveness of the measures proposed. His delegation hesitated to speak against any particular proposal, but it was anxious that the financial aspect of the problem should receive all due consideration.

Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) commended the perfectly balanced drafting of the report (ST/SG/AC.4/L.4), but reserved his Government's position regarding the financial implications of the recommendations set forth in it.

The representative of Saudi Arabia had very aptly asked whether there might not be certain profit-earning activities that might be undertaken in connexion with the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration. The United Kingdom delegation had serious misgivings about the practical usefulness of providing a bronze plaque, and would prefer to see any such item financed through voluntary contributions. Non-governmental organizations might perhaps make themselves responsible for that matter, since they in any case had a large part to play in the celebration. His own Government, for one, was doing and would continue to do all it could to ensure that the principles of the Declaration were known and applied in the territories for which it was responsible.

The USSR representative had mentioned some points which did not seem to him to come within the Committee's terms of reference. In any event his own delegation was confident that, in making any additions to the report, the Rapporteur would preserve the state of balance which now characterized it.

Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea) congratulated the Sub-Committee on its useful and practical work. All delegations were aware of the need to take into due account the precarious financial situation of the United Nations. His delegation, like that of the USSR, would have preferred paragraph 8 of the report to be more explicit and, more specifically to list the most flagrant violations of human rights, among which the subjugation of peoples and racial discrimination were the gravest. Turning to the suggestions and recommendations set forth in the second part of the report, he expressed the view that the history of the Declaration, proposed in paragraph 2 (e), should make mention of the popular liberation movement which had grown up in Africa and elsewhere in the world, of the efforts now being made by the United Nations to eradicate the consequences of colonialism, and of the remaining work to be done in the latter field. In connexion with paragraph 2(f) he pointed out that there was an African organization - the African Radio Television Union - which embraced all independent territories in Africa with the exception of South Africa. The United Nations should establish contact with the Union, which might be of great assistance in spreading knowledge of the Declaration. He was pleased to note from the statement of the previous speaker that the United Kingdom Government would do its utmost in the matter of dissemination; special efforts, for instance, should be made to reach the peoples of Southern Rhodesia. Lastly, the special messages of Heads of State or of Government referred to in paragraph 4 (b) might emphasize the necessity of liberating all peoples in the world still under domination.

Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) recalled that his Government no longer had any power to intervene in the domestic affairs of Southern Rhodesia.

The CHAIRMAN said that the suggestions put forward by the representative of Guinea regarding sub-paragraphs 2 (e) and 2 (f) and sub-paragraph 4 (b) would be taken into account as far as possible. He would like to have the opinion of other delegations on the suggestions made by the representatives of the Soviet Union and Guinea concerning paragraph 8 of the report.

Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea) pointed out, in reply to Mr. Attlee, that even if the United Kingdom was unable to intervene directly in the internal affairs of Southern Rhodesia, there was nothing to stop it from reaching the inhabitants of that country by way of the radio stations of Nyasaland, Bechuanaland, and Northern Rhodesia.

Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) considered that it was necessary to take care, when disseminating the Universal Declaration throughout the world, not to give a false idea of that document by stressing only some of its features. It was undeniable that colonialism, racial discrimination and religious intolerance continued to exist, but it was equally true that considerable progress had been made in the campaign against those evils, which fortunately now affected only a minority of human beings, whereas other articles of the Universal Declaration which were at least as important, such as the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, and the right to education, were still a dead letter for over half the human race. Those two rights, like the right to a nationality or the right to freedom of movement, were at least as important as the struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination, but it would be an error to lay particular stress on one of them and thus push the others into the background. The subjects of each country enjoyed those various freedoms to a greater or lesser extent, and imperfections in that regard were not the same in every country. In any country which might be named, whether it was the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom or Saudi Arabia, the enjoyment of human rights was unequal, as no country had attained absolute perfection in that field. For that reason, the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration should be celebrated without acrimony, rancour or bitterness, and without each nation trying to promote its own interests. It would therefore be better not to lay undue stress on the struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination, and he appealed to the representatives of Guinea and the Soviet Union not to insist on that point.

Returning to his earlier proposal, he added that if the number of profitable activities could be increased, it would be possible to obtain still larger funds than those foreseen by the representative of the Secretary-General. He also

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supported the proposal put forward by the United Kingdom representative on the subject of financing the bronze plaque to be put up at Headquarters. He remarked that such a plaque should under no circumstances be used for giving personal publicity to the donors; it should be put up in the name of the United Nations, and not in the name of this or that person or organization.

Mr. LUQMAN (Mauritania) was also of the opinion that putting up a bronze plaque would hardly be of any practical service to the cause of human rights. In contrast, he considered that the representative of Guinea had been quite right in pointing out the advisability of calling on the African Radio and Television Union in connexion with the celebration of the anniversary. The Secretariat should, moreover, give particular attention to radio programmes, for there were many people, in Africa for example, for whom it was impossible to communicate with the outside world or to receive publications from it, but who possessed radio sets. Whatever the representative of Saudi Arabia might say, there were still millions of people in Africa who were living under oppression and who must be helped to win their freedom. The Government of Mauritania was on excellent terms with all the former colonialist countries, and he was amazed that anyone could think that the mere fact of mentioning colonialism was bound always to give rise to rancour and dissension.

He hoped that the report would expressly mention his proposal that all Member States should be urged to devote at least fifteen minutes of radio time to the Universal Declaration.

Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea) made it clear that it had never been his intention, in raising certain questions, to create an atmosphere of acrimony or rancour. With all due respect to the representative of Saudi Arabia, the problem of colonialism could not be put on the same level as the problem of the standard of living, or, in other words, of economic under-development, with which the United Nations would be dealing more particularly within the framework of the Development Decade. As for the right to education, he pointed out that education had made astonishing progress in the former colonial countries ever since they had obtained their freedom. Nothing, moreover, could alter the fact that colonialism was the gravest and most flagrant of all violations of human rights, that it was therefore necessary

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expressly to castigate such an abuse, and that the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration was the best possible opportunity for doing so. It must be determined against which evils the United Nations could act most effectively on the occasion of the anniversary, and to focus all efforts on the most vital points. If the United Nations could not do that, then the Governments of the African countries would, of course, do it themselves, so that, no matter what happened, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration would also commemorate the struggle against colonialism.

Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) thanked the representative of Guinea for having drawn the Committee's attention to sub-paragraph 5 (a) (page 9). The United Kingdom Government was indeed assisting the Office of Public Information in the matter of radio broadcasts and the dissemination of documentation in many African countries, including Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. He hoped that the information disseminated was reaching Southern Rhodesia, but he had no way of making sure of that.

Mr. OSTROVSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in reply to a remark made by the Chairman, who had asked him to formulate a concrete proposal, said that in his previous statement, he had proposed that paragraph 8 should be modified so as to give a faithful picture of the views expressed during the discussions. Although the main object of the draft report was to define the consensus of the Committee, it had the further object of recording differences of opinion and noting all the opinions expressed. There was nothing revolutionary about what the Soviet delegation was proposing, and it therefore had difficulty in understanding the appeal made by the representative of Saudi Arabia. The important thing was that the report should reflect the various opinions expressed on the subject of colonialism and racial discrimination.

According to the representative of Saudi Arabia, it was wrong to attach more importance to certain questions than to others. The representative of that country had also felt it his duty to refer to human rights in the Soviet Union. It was quite true that nothing as yet was perfect, but in the Soviet Union there were specific programmes designed to consolidate human rights and fundamental freedoms still further.

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As far as the financial implications were concerned, the Soviet delegation considered that the delegations which were opposed to the idea of a commemorative plaque might well be right, as such a plaque would be very expensive and of doubtful utility. It would only serve to lead the public into error, for in reality the Universal Declaration was not fully applied. What was more, many people would think that the United Nations would be better advised to devote the funds at its disposal to the struggle against colonialism, racialism and violations of human rights.

The CHAIRMAN announced that, if there were no objections, the amendments proposed by the Rapporteur and by various delegations would be incorporated in the draft report. Some delegations were opposed to the idea of a plaque: their objections would be recorded in the report, and the Commission on Human Rights would decide the matter. As opinions differed on paragraph 8, he thought that it would be best to ask the Rapporteur to make a careful note of the suggestions of representatives who wished stress to be laid on certain specific violations of human rights. All the suggestions would be incorporated in an addendum to document ST/SG/AC.4/L.4. It might be necessary to envisage an additional meeting to consider such an addendum.

Mr. SAWAI (Japan) wished to compliment the Rapporteur on his excellent report as well as the members of the Sub-Committee and the Secretariat for their valuable assistance. The draft report, which had been amended in a well-balanced way, reflected the terms of reference of the Committee and the opinions and suggestions expressed by various members. It was a good piece of work, and he supported it fully. He also stressed the importance of mobilizing public opinion for the observance of human rights and of making peoples aware not only of their rights but also of their obligations if human rights were to be respected. The forthcoming anniversary would provide an excellent opportunity to attain those purposes.

Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) declared that he did not wish to prevent certain delegations from putting their views on record, but he failed to see the usefulness of formulating further specific proposals. If that course was to be followed, one might as well also mention questions such as nuclear tests, which imperilled the right to life set forth in article 3 of the Universal Declaration.

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(Mr. Barcody, Saudi Arabia)

To enumerate particular human rights according to the importance attached to them would only complicate the task of the Commission on Human Rights. He wished to make it clear that his previous statement had been prompted by a desire to establish a balance.

Mr. MEANS (United States of America) deplored the fact that the debate had degenerated into a controversy. As a co-sponsor of resolution 1775 (XVII), it came as a surprise to the United States delegation that that resolution was now being considered as a corollary to resolution 1514 (XV). If paragraph 8 of the draft report was to be modified, it should be balanced through the inclusion of references to all the fundamental freedoms as well as facts such as neo-colonialism, religious intolerance, "economic crimes" and racial discrimination. As for the Chairman's proposal, he suggested a slight modification: the Rapporteur might prepare a separate document for the Secretary-General, who would decide whether or not it should be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) said that he agreed with the representatives of the United States and Saudi Arabia. To be judiciously worded, the addendum which the Chairman had in mind should mention the opinions expressed on all the human rights and fundamental freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration.

Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea) said that he was unable to come to a decision regarding the draft report as it stood. Furthermore, he was unable to accept a proposal which, in effect, would relegate the opinions of African and other States to the background by recording them in a separate document. He therefore opposed the United States proposal and suggested that the Committee should hold another meeting on the matter.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that there would be no question of a separate document, but rather of addenda to the final document which would be submitted in due course to the Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. OSTROVSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) considered it advisable to provide for a further meeting to examine the final document which the Rapporteur would have redrafted in the light of the opinions expressed.

He was afraid that the representative of Saudi Arabia had not understood him properly. The argument of the Soviet Union was that all the statements of

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opinion should find a place in the report, including the very point of view that he was expressing. If, for example, Saudi Arabia wished to mention article 3 of the Universal Declaration, it was free to do so. As for the United States, if it wished to insist on the necessity of combating neo-colonialism, the Soviet delegation would support it.

Furthermore, the representative of Saudi Arabia seemed to forget that although certain countries had made progress with regard to human rights, the situation had worsened in other countries. That was a point which it was important to stress.

The RAPPORTEUR said that in drafting the report, he had endeavoured to bring out the unanimity which had been achieved within the Committee. Several delegations were anxious that their opinions should be mentioned in the report; those opinions would be duly recorded in the addendum. Speaking as the representative of Greece, he suggested that when the addendum had been circulated, the members of the Committee should take the advice of the Chairman as to the suitability of having another meeting.

The CHAIRMAN, taking up the suggestion of the Greek representative, proposed that the Committee should wait until it had received the addendum in question before fixing the date of a further meeting.

Mr. BALOOBY (Saudi Arabia) thought it would be more practical to set the date of the next meeting at once, whereupon the Chairman might close the meeting.

Mr. AMUMIN-NAJADHON (Thailand) supported that motion.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 21 February, at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.